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To the Graduate Program:

This project, entitled “Metacognitive Activities to Strengthen Reading Comprehension Skills” and written by Lady Lorena Ospitia Cifuentes, is presented to the Graduate Program of Greensboro College. I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Paula Wilder, Advisor

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Project and recommend its
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METACOGNITIVE ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN READING
COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Presented to
the Graduate Program
of
Greensboro College

In partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

By
Lady Lorena Ospitia Cifuentes

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Advisor: Professor Paula Wilder

Abstract

Learning a second language is a process that requires the incorporation of different strategies in order to improve learners' language abilities. In this project, I will briefly review different research that details the importance of improving reading comprehension by connecting metacognitive principles. Reading abilities such as fluency, phonological awareness, morphological and syntactic awareness, working memory, word reading, and word reading fluency exercises will address this research. Furthermore, with the goal to motivate non-native speakers to improve their reading abilities, this research is about Content-Based Instruction (CBI). The activities will be designed as a useful, practical, and didactic set of materials. The connection between reading ability and metacognition strategies will train learners to be able to comprehend a text and to facilitate second language learning. Likewise, the exercises will focus directly on developing reading skills to accomplish the reading comprehension of foreign L2 learners.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to God, to my beloved parents, husband, and son, who were my inspiration and provided their love and patience during this project.

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I wish to express my sincere thanks to my advisor Prof. Paula Wilder who provided me with all the feedback and guided me to complete this thesis and to all the TESOL instructors and tutors for all their teachings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Learning a second language is a process that globally requires the use of thousands of educational strategies which allow learners to develop all four communication abilities. For this reason, many educational systems have included L2 learning into curriculum plans in order to develop a foreign language learning from an early age through high school. Years ago, educational systems in countries like Colombia saw the native language as primary language for communication in its territory, not taking into consideration foreign languages. Nevertheless, in 1994, the General Education Law of this country recognized the necessity to generate learning opportunities for foreign languages, which led to the development of a foreign languages art class as a mandatory area for all schools in the curriculum (Ministerio de Educación, 2018). However, in spite of great efforts made in this country, in 2018 Colombia was placed in 60th place among 88 countries as masters of English as a second language (ElEspectador, 2018). Research has suggested three main factors that explain these low results in the mastery of English as a second language in Colombia.

1. Low use of L2.
2. Lack of cultural diversity in the country.
3. Inadequately trained teachers who are responsible for teaching an L2.

Unlike Colombia, the U.S. has been characterized as a multicultural country, and according to the latest study conducted by the Migration Policy Institute, 44.5 million immigrants resided in the U.S. in 2017 (Zong, Batalova, & Burrows, 2014) for reasons such as jobs, security or social issues, which demonstrate the need to maintain high educational

standards to ensure the proficiency of English as a second language for all. Currently, all educational systems in the U.S. have the responsibility to carefully monitor on an annual basis the development of teaching English as a second language for all immigrant students, including high L2 procedures and qualified ESL teachers. A good illustration is the Asheboro City school district in North Carolina, which, given the high population of non-native English speakers, began recognizing years ago the importance of service to ensure the same learning opportunities for all students regardless of racial origin or immigration status. For this reason, ESL teachers continued providing assignments related to improving all four communication skills, which include reading, writing, listening, and speaking. (About the District, 2019).

In order to support this goal, the purpose of this project will be to create a series of metacognitive activities to strengthen reading comprehension skills regarding three main learning outcomes: (1) to become successful in L2, (2) to be fluent readers in L2, and (3) to encourage critical fluency in L2. The final product of this project will provide ESL teachers with the opportunity to incorporate these activities into their lesson plans according to students' needs and, then, to use them as an intervention for core support or assessment. For this reason, this project will include a series of learning interactive activities based fluency, phonological awareness, morphological and syntactic awareness, working memory, word reading, and word reading fluency.

It is necessary to provide an educational resources in order to improve language-learning opportunities that involve characteristics that maximize the levels of second language. It is also important to encourage students to achieve a high-level awareness and proficiency in the L2. As a result, the approach to developing these activities will be Content-Based Instruction method (CBI), created by Brinton, Snow, and Wesche in 1989. This approach uses thematic units and

inspires students to receive comprehensible input to facilitate language learning for academic success. Moreover, by using this approach students will be able to be engaged in authentic activities incorporated within the main theme (Herrera & Murphy, 2016). The activities will include different components to encourage several multiple interrelated skills: fluency, interpretation, listening comprehension, phonological awareness, writing conventions, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. In addition, the incorporation of these activities aims to make learning interesting and fun for foreign L2 learners.

Considering my teaching experience as a second language teacher, students tend to find success in the L2 when they are given the chance to develop their L2 abilities like reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Hirsh, 2012). These skills best generate an L2 knowledge when they are utilized in a spontaneously way through exposure to different learning opportunities, and at the completion of this project, ESL teachers within the school district will be able to benefit. The project will also be a great resource for Colombian ESL teachers who seek to improve the second language ability in their country. Finally, it can also serve as a reference for others researchers at Greensboro College.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

All educational systems in the U.S have the responsibility to teach immigrant students English as an L2, with the purpose of ensuring the same learning opportunities for all students. Freire (1993) commented that teachers must use all outside learning that students bring with them to class. For example, teachers must consider the way students speak, how they express themselves, and how they think about the world with the intention of allowing students to perceive their classroom as a place where they are able to think, investigate, model, and share. Currently, teachers have the chance to choose between different methods that expose students to different learning strategies in order to develop and improve their learning process. For this reason, Chapter 2 presents the literature review related to the metacognition method and the ideas involved, in order to strengthen reading comprehension skills in ESL learners.

Defining Metacognition

The term metacognition has been defined by psychology and other cognition sciences as the theory of the mind, which helps the human brain to develop an input of any kind of ideas (Flavell, 1976). Additionally, Wilson and Conyers (2016) have defined metacognition as a “process which involves thinking about one’s thinking, or cognition, with the goal of enhancing learning, and based on the work of developmental psychologist John Flavell” (p. 8). In this thinking process, it is significant to use the following cognitive strategies in order to transmit learning and develop abilities through practice and use:

Maintain motivation in each learning performance.

Set up learning goals and plans to help students achieve them.

Monitor learning process.

Connect all experiences to subjects and personal lives. (Wilson & Conyers, 2016, p. 9)

Cognitive assets are all kinds of strategies that help students to succeed in learning by using metacognition and problem –solving. Furthermore, cognitive assets use metacognition with the purpose to develop different levels of thinking. Wilson and Conyers (2016) presented two cognitive assets, the use of a cognitive strategy to solve any problem and second, and metacognition to observe the effectiveness of each strategy used in a lesson plan. Another definition associated with metacognition comes from Ambrose, Bridges, Lovett, Pietro, and Norman (2010), who described metacognition as a cycle that helps students to develop critical thinking and become self-directed learners. This cycle includes five phases.

1. To assess the task by having a clear picture of new learning.
2. Assesses strengths and weaknesses, where the student can evaluate his/her thinking.
3. Plan an approach, the stage where the scholar visualizes his/her needs and make a plan based on specific strategies.
4. Applies strategies, where the learner applies his or her learning and thinking strategies and monitor his or her process.
5. Reflect, the student conduct a self-assessment about the plan and approach, and the functionality of the strategies applied. (Spencer, 2017)

Teachers can use the five phases, according to students' abilities and needs. Each phase can be presented at different times and need not follow a specific a unique pattern. The first step is going to depend on the students' abilities to self-regulate their learning and how they are able to scaffold the knowledge. Some terms associated with metacognition also include executive function, which focuses on organization, planning, self-monitoring, and higher-order thinking (Spencer, 2017). Executive function allows learners to direct their goals by monitoring, regulating and controlling their cognitive skills (Pintrich, 2000). Furthermore, mindfulness is also important in metacognitive strategies because it focuses on the quality or state of being conscious and development in the present for current feelings and thoughts (Mrazek, Franklin, Phillips, Baird, & Schooler, 2013). Each of the terms mentioned above support the development of learning and the students' cognitive abilities.

Metacognitive: Approach

Metacognition method is described as “thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self-evaluation of learning” (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, & Russo, 1985, p. 21). Moreover, Pellerigo and Hilton (2012) focused on three main metacognition domains that are presented in the learning process. Cognitive focuses on the ability to think and reason, Intrapersonal focuses on the ability to regulate behaviors and emotions for success, and Interpersonal relates to the chance to understand other's thinking (Pellerigo & Hilton, 2012, p. 13). By putting together these three main strategies, students are able to achieve a high proficiency level. In addition, the latest inquiry rated metacognition in fifteenth place on a scale of 150 factors which might influence students' success in the thinking and learning process (Pellerigo & Hilton, 2012, p. 14).

Other research shows that the metacognitive approach is a strategy that helps students to achieve in-depth learning by being able to recognize and capitalize on strengths at the same time they are improving on their weaknesses, using motivation as a complement (Caine & Caine, 1991). The brain has an inexhaustible job, and it is to learn, so every minute the brain is receiving thousands of stimuli which motivate students to continue learning. Caine and Caine, (1991) defined metacognition as the ability to detect certain configurations and develop a self-correct experience by being able to analyze using a self-reflective process (p. 3). Teachers who understand the effect and capacity of the brain and develop metacognitive strategies in their classroom, help learners to develop in their learning process by using experiences and life moments rather than memorization. Similarly, Lovett (2008) reported that teaching with metacognition develops cognitive skills that allow students to improve their learning by understanding three main components such using assumptions, previous knowledge, and understanding their weaknesses. Besides, metacognition generates effective learning when the teacher empowers strategies such as planning, monitoring and adapting processes in the reading instruction (Lovett, 2008, pp. 5-6).

Metacognition Strategies in Reading Comprehension

Currently, one of the main characteristics in the teaching process is the use of cognitive strategies that allows students to improve their abilities. O'Malley et al. (1985) stated that "students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to review their progress, accomplishments, and future directions" (p. 561). The metacognitive method has been shown to be a new opportunity for learners to improve their language skills, such as reading comprehension. Likewise, Karbalaei (2001) suggested that

reading comprehension can be divided into a metacognitive awareness by recognizing what learners know and a metacognitive regulation by understanding when and where learners can apply strategies (p. 6). Metacognitive strategies also allow readers to be proficient in the L2 by developing a cognitive plan where they can be able to observe the progress, evaluate the plan, supporting the plan through tools for comprehension.

Schema theory.

Another comprehension process that relates to the metacognition in reading comprehension is the schema theory. Schema theory activates prior knowledge and allows students to make the brain stronger by thinking, making connections and inferring new information. Al-Issa (2006) described the following three main schemas that improve the comprehension process for L2. The first is to possess a content schema where readers need to focus on the significance to understand the reading according to their previous knowledge or experiences; the second is to possess formal schema where readers need to be conscious with the discourse level and structural make-up of the genre of the text, and the third is to possess a language schema which focuses on decoding features such as word recognition. Besides, the three schemas include different thinking stems for making connections, visualizing an image, asking self-questions, inferring and predicting, synthesizing, summarizing, evaluating settings and characters (Al-Issa, 2006, pp. 41-42).

Thinking aloud.

As part of metacognition strategies, thinking aloud is a strategy that provides to learner the chance to verbalize aloud and describing reading by constructing meanings using any kind of

text. Think aloud strategy bring the next three main practices in order to improve reading comprehension: to know how to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words by clarifying them, re-reading the sentences, and to monitor how much students understand a text. These practices are helpful during reading instruction because it allows students to self-reflect about what they know and generate their own questions to guide reading comprehension. Pearson and Gallagher (1983) gave a framework called the gradual release of responsibility model which improves reading instruction by using a cognitive load where teachers and students are included. The focus on the framework is to support learners and teachers to be able to take responsibility and work independently. Within this model, teachers provide an explicit description of the strategy, which focuses on explaining to learners that reading-aloud strategies will improve their thinking and reading comprehension. Next, teachers design how to develop a particular ability by using the text. The final component in the model teachers provide guided instruction to increase student thinking abilities. (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983, pp. 35-36).

The gradual release of responsibility model can also be used in order to activate metacognition in the reading instruction and train students with the purpose to monitor their own progress in reading comprehension. Wilson and Conyers (2016) described think-aloud as a model for teachers and students to convey what they learn from their mistakes and think about how they learn and how they can improve their learning (p. 17). One significant strategy in a think-aloud process is to help introduce metacognition and cognitive assets to students during reading instruction. In addition, Wilson and Conyers (2016) gave five ideas that can be adapted according to learners' reading process by using the think-aloud strategy.

The first idea is to introduce learners to the terminology about metacognition. This first step helps learners to understand why and how their answers come to the brain and improves

learning. The second is to begin a lesson on metacognition words by describing the importance of incorporating metacognition into the daily lessons and to announce a cognitive asset every week in order for students to become familiar with the term of metacognition in thinking aloud. The third step is to use metaphors to explore the effects of how metacognition works. The fourth step is to allow students to become metacognitive, and the fifth step is to allow students to lead discussions, encouraging them to share their examples in the classroom or outside the classroom (Wilson & Convers, 2016, pp.17-19).

Self-regulated learning.

Another significant metacognition reading strategy is self-regulated learning, which improves students' reading performance (Corno & Mandinach, 1983; Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985). Self-regulated learning considers three components in a classroom: the first one focuses on metacognitive strategies in planning, monitoring, and modifying students' cognition; the second relates to how students manage their effort on academic procedures; the third is to describe how cognitive strategies engage learning and result in higher levels of reading (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990, p. 33). Likewise, self-regulated learning allows learners to become aware of strengths and weaknesses by using motivation to improve their academic performance (Quigley, Muijs, & Stringer, 2011, p. 9), which involves three main components: cognition, metacognition, and motivation. These three components develop cognitive strategies that are involved in the learning process. The cognitive approach increases students' cognition by helping learners to become successful in the thinking process. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) explained cognitive strategies as a way for learners to operate incoming information (p. 44). For example, skills such as memorization techniques or subject-specific strategies are involved in the cognitive strategies

(Quigley, Muijs, & Stringer, 2011, p. 9). In addition to cognitive strategies, metacognition encompasses another set of techniques to monitor and direct learners toward specific pathways to success in terms of their thinking. Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier and Ryan. (1991) clarified that the main characteristic in motivation is to promote students to direct themselves intentionally and non-intentionally (p. 326). Intentionally is described as how people actively engage thinking into meaningful phrases. Conversely, non-intentionally focuses on strategies for people who, without previous thinking, are able to have self-problem solving, self-knowledge acquisitions, and social responsibility (Deci et al., 1991, pp. 325-326).

Learning brain.

Learning brain refers to techniques that are motivated by the learning and supported by neuroscience of learning. Wilson and Convers (2016) proposed a brain concept called synaptogenesis as a response to thoughts, actions, and sensory perceptions occurring during learning. Neural-plasticity represents one of the features in synaptogenesis process, and neural-plasticity emphasizes the brain's capacity to apply learning and become more functionally intelligent (Wilson, D. & Convers, M., 2016, p. 24). Neural-plasticity is based on the personal experience-dependent synaptogenesis. In research by Shonkoff and Phillips (2000), they suggested that the brain grows through the use of life experiences by “encoding new experiences that occur throughout life, fostering new brain growth and the refinement of existing brain structures and varies for every individual” (p. 206). Through the repetition of individual experiences, neural-plasticity helps the brain to make connections using prior knowledge and new learning. Wilson and Convers (2016) postulated a method called IPO (Input, Processing, Output) in order to develop the brain plasticity strategy (pp. 26-28): First, input is where learners

identify what they need to know and gather the information needed for successful outcomes, and processing is where students examine, analyze, and elaborate all information gathered in the input phase. The last output phase refers to learners communicate, apply, and demonstrate their newly developed knowledge.

Applying three self-regulated phases, teachers can see learners direct their brains by processing information and frame their knowledge performance in content areas, such as math, literacy, science, or reading comprehension (Wilson & Convers, 2016, p. 29). Furthermore, self-reflection questions are meaningful for teachers to ask learners so their brains can become functionally smarter when they struggle with a subject or a task and reflection questions aid in thought and emotional development as students complete a task.

Caine, Caine, McClintic, and Klimex (2008) explained that teachers have the possibility to learn how to brain natural learning principles in students. Twelve learning capacities demonstrate students' capacities to learn and comprehend a language. Within the capacities, they explain multiple necessities the reader needs to have in order to find meaning and comprehend what is read. By being conscious and explicit, the students need to be given multiple experiences to support their learning (pp. 5-6).

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension includes activities where students are able to use metacognitive strategies such as self-questioning, self-correcting. Besides, reading comprehension gives learners the opportunity to recognize text details and make adjustments in the reading process and improves the ability to understand a text from different perspectives, which includes a multidimensional process. It features literacy devices, such as the understanding the meaning of

words, setting, style, theme, and characters. Lipka and Siegel (2012) defined reading comprehension as a process that includes three main factors related to the reading process, and they examined the cognitive and linguistic factors that influence reading comprehension (p. 1873). One factor refers to the reader's ability to comprehend words and sentences, and the second to the text, which refers to all kinds of literature, and the last one involves textual features such as the intention, formal level, and topic. Likewise, their research shows the main role of word reading, reading fluency, phonological, morphological and syntactic awareness, and working memory (p. 1873) in learning English as a second language (ESL).

Other research, like RAND Reading Study Group (Lipka & Siegel, 2012), defined reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (p. 1974). Besides, reading comprehension consists of three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading. According to Al-Issa (2006), reading comprehension occurs as a connection between the previous background and the new information and the match to a content-based schema where cultural elements orientate the comprehension (p. 42). Reading comprehension is a process that might be affected by word-reading problems and the genre of the reading. These two components demonstrated deficits in skills, such as working memory, speed, or decoding (Lipka & Siegel, 2012, p. 1875). For this reason, in order to achieve reading comprehension in L1 or L2, learners need to develop phonemic and phonological awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary in order to become successful readers (The National Reading Panel, 2000).

Fluency.

Fluency refers to reading with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. In learning to read fluently, decoding represents one of the main abilities in order to achieve reading comprehension. Perfetti (1985 as cited in Lipka & Siegel, 2012) also described reading comprehension as a combination of elements, including speed and accuracy of real-word recognition (p. 1875). A report from the National Reading Panel (2000) described fluency as an ability where students are able to be fluent by reading a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression (p. 3-1). Additionally, Schreiber (1980, 1987 as cited in National Reading Panel, 2000) incorporated “meaningful grammatical interpretation” (p. 3-6), which included cognitive process such as group words, rapid use of punctuation, interpretation, and first-view recognition words. Meaningful grammatical interpretation is also involved in the fluency process.

Phonemic awareness.

The National Reading Panel (2000) has referred to phonemic awareness “to the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words” (p. 2-1). The research found phoneme isolation, phoneme identity, phoneme categorization, phoneme blending, phoneme segmentation, and phoneme deletion are significant reading strategies to assess students in order to achieve phonemic awareness. Besides, the correct development of the phonological components yields better results in students' reading abilities and also enables the learner to become successful in English as a second language.

Phonological awareness.

Phonological awareness refers to students' ability to identify syllables and rhyming words in a sentence. Schatschneider, Francis, Foorman, Fletcher, and Mehta (1999 as cited in National Reading Panel, 2000) emphasized six tasks for fluency development. The first- sound comparison requires the student to match pictures with the same phonemes. Then the student will blend segments into real words using onset- rime and phonemes. Once students build words, they can then break apart the word into its individual phonemes. Students can also delete a single phoneme from a given set in order to identify the word that remains. (p.49). In addition, Yoshikawa and Yamashita (2014) found in their research how previous phonological awareness in L2 learners affect the process of L2 learning and also how phonological information can be affected by the orthographic properties of their L1 (p. 72).

Vocabulary

Another research that focuses on teaching reading with metacognition is Campillo (1995) who mentioned vocabulary development as one of the main components to increase reading comprehension. Similarly, The National Reading Panel (2000) suggested the importance of supporting teaching vocabulary in order to learn how to decode, compound, and decompound real or unfamiliar words. However, the most common ways to help students achieve high levels of reading comprehension are decoding, sight words, analogy, and reading prediction (pp. 123-126). With these four main reading strategies,

Conclusion

This section presents a final reflection based on the importance of including the metacognitive method in order to strengthen reading comprehension skills for ESL learners. With the purpose to propose metacognitive activities as an essential component in the reading process, the theoretical analysis was formulated through different authors and researchers that have worked on metacognitive strategies and its direct link with reading comprehension. During the design of the literature, the most important metacognitive features included were schema theory, thinking aloud, self-regulated learning, learning brain and reading strategies, such as fluency, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and phonological awareness in order to create interaction between the metacognitive learning features and the reading comprehension skills. As was mentioned by Carell (1987), metacognitive activities will improve self-regulatory skills and also engaging self-questioning to identify reading goals and failures incomprehension (p. 239). Likewise, metacognitive principles will create a positive effect in which learners will share common reading principles and strengthen cognitive and linguistic skills.

Chapter 3: Project Design

This project focuses on how to strengthen reading skills through the use of metacognitive strategies, which allow ESL readers to improve reading comprehension. In the previous chapter, studies demonstrated the positive effects, reading strategies, and the connection between incorporating metacognitive activities to strengthen reading comprehension. Aspects, such as learning to identify meaning from texts and learning how to develop reading cognitive skills, are relevant to drive the interaction between the readers and written texts (Carrell et al., 1988, p. 97). The terms strategies or skills have been used in learning instructions because both concepts refer to the action where readers are able to develop and control their reading goals in order to focus on their learning (Carrell et al., 1988, p. 98). Besides, strategies in reading comprehension affect learners' ability to develop and control their own goals according to the learning objectives. Furthermore, research has demonstrated high results of incorporating metacognitive activities in reading instructions, not only for non-native speakers, but also for native speakers. Zvetina (1987) mentioned "skimming and scanning, to rereading, contextual guessing or skipping unknown words, tolerating ambiguity, making predictions, confirming or disconfirming inferences, and using cognates to comprehend" (p. 232) are strategies that can improve reading comprehension. Although studies have been done related to reading strategies and metacognition, the creation of interactive activities is important in order to help readers to make experiential and cognitive connections where readers can learn, not only new vocabulary, but also develop fluency in order to recognize words and have phonemic awareness.

This project uses Content-Based Instruction (CBI) method created by Brinton, Snow and Wesche, (1989) which focuses on a pacing guide for second language acquisition. The CBI

method suggests an integration of content and language through teaching specific content and is grounded in the communicative approach and known as Language Across the Curriculum (LAC). Mohan (1986 as cited in Tang, 1994) referred to the importance of integrating language and content and proposed the use thematic units where learners can receive comprehensible input to facilitate mastery learning that helps learners to succeed in second language learning. The CBI method requires teachers to select the content to help language instruction and contextualize learning by having a direct relationship between language and content learning (Brinton et al., 1989, p.100). With the purpose to engage and motivate students in the learning process, the CBI method includes authentic learning activities where learners can use, analyze, and apply their previous knowledge in the real world (Herrera & Murry, 2016). Additionally, CBI integrates cognitive, academic skills, and understanding that promote the student's language acquisition and cognitive development (Curtain & Hass, 1995). As a result of the research and strategies related to metacognition, I have created a project that focuses on strengthening reading comprehension through metacognitive activities. The final product of project is a series of interactive activities including picture vocabulary, alphabetic recognition, phonemes awareness, phonemes awareness, fluency, and comprehension reading. Understanding that the adequate development of the PA contributes to the improvement of reading ability, the tasks include phonemes awareness where students are able to recognize phonemes, blend phonemes, and syllables.

Phonemes awareness activities are divided into six main topics: phoneme isolation, phoneme identity, phoneme categorization, phoneme blending, phoneme segmentation, and phoneme deletion (Teaching Children, 2000, p. 2). In the case of phonological awareness, tasks are focused on “syllables and rhyming words, including generating words that rhyme, to segment

sentences into words, to segment polysyllabic words into syllables, or to delete syllables from words” (Teaching Children, 2000, pp. 2-10). Fluency and reading comprehension include short fluency phrases where readers are able to practice sight words, listen and follow the text, and reread. In addition, the reading comprehension component focuses on metacognitive questions where readers remember, apply and evaluate their cognitive skills. Through the activities and the metacognitive strategies, I expect readers can develop their reading abilities to understand the different texts. Likewise, readers are able to apply reading strategies and self-regulated learning by the use of metacognition.

Chapter 4: Final Project- Interactive Activities

The present project contains a PowerPoint game with five main components guided to the lower and intermediate level students to improve their reading skills. By having this resource in the class during instructional time, ESL/ EFL teachers will be able to use it as a motivational way to encourage learners to practice reading strategies and increase reading comprehension abilities in English. The expectation of this activity game is to motivate students to use metacognition as the main component to improve their learning process. The interactive activities game can be accessed at the URL <https://lorenaospitia.wixsite.com/metacognitionreading>

The activities for each component were created by following the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) method because CBI inspires readers to receive input to facilitate the learning process by learning a second language. In addition, each activity encourages readers to self-monitor during reading, to self-evaluate their own performance, and to self-regulate by passing through the next level. The game includes authentic activities that focuses on multiple interrelated skills: listening comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, vocabulary, fluency, reading comprehension, and interpretation. Each activity proposed is geared to encourage readers to achieve reading standards and to be proficient as an English speaker as they answer multiple-choice questions created by Edward Thorndike in the mid-20th century.

Each task includes prerecorded audio, which will help students to hear the instruction and understand what they have to do. Students will be motivated by getting Metapoints every time they go to the next question. The first skills focus on Phonemic Awareness in which readers are going to be able to develop rhyme identification, sound and phoneme blending, and sound

segmentation. In the Rhyme Identification section, readers will have to find the words that rhyme with the word given. (Figure 1.1. See also Appendix A, Slides #1-6).



Figure 1.1. Rhyme Identification

The second section is titled Sound and Phoneme Blending where students will have to listen to each sound and sound out the parts together to know which word they make (Figure 1.2. See also Appendix A, Slides #7-12). The last section is called Sound Segmentation. In this section, the student will have to listen to each word and separate by sounds (Figure 1.3. See also Appendix A, Slides #13-17).



Figure 1.2. Sound and Phoneme Blending

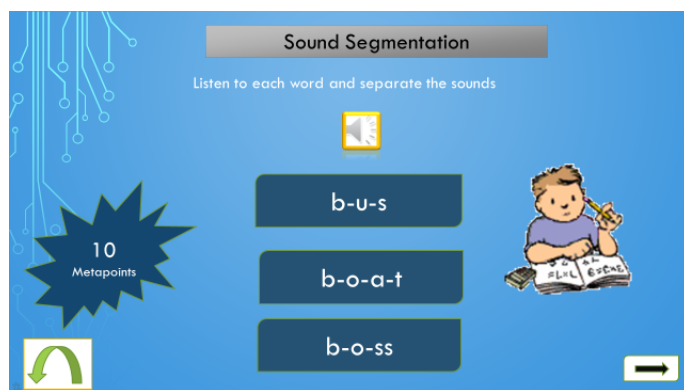


Figure 1.3. Sound Segmentation

The next main component is Phonological Awareness. In this section, students can practice four reading strategies. The first section is Initial Phonemes which focus on helping learners practice identifying initial phonemes by listening to the words and matching the initial and last sounds with the picture that starts with the same sound. In this section, ESL learners have the option to see the pictures and the words in order to help their brains to identify the vocabulary for a word that they do not recognize (Figure 2.1. See also Appendix B, Slides # 1-6).

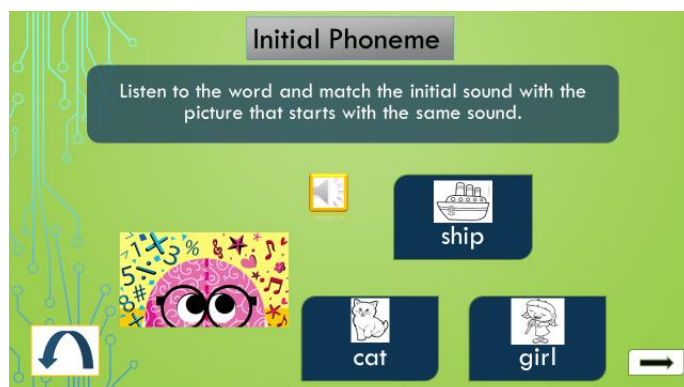


Figure 2.1. Initial Phoneme

The next section corresponds to Syllable Blending exercises in which students have to listen to the syllables and put the parts together to identify the whole word (Figure 2.2. See also Appendix B, Slides #7-12).

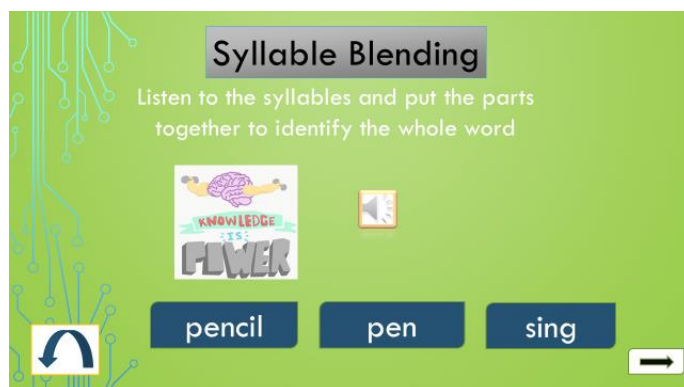


Figure 2.2. Syllable Blending

The last two sections focus on Syllable Deletion and Counting Syllables activities. On Syllable Deletion section, students have to listen carefully to the word and leave off the first syllable (Figure 2.3. See also Appendix B, Slides # 13-19). The fourth section has the purpose to help students identify how many syllables the word has (Figure 2.4. See also Appendix B, Slides #20-26).



Figure 2.3. Syllable Deletion

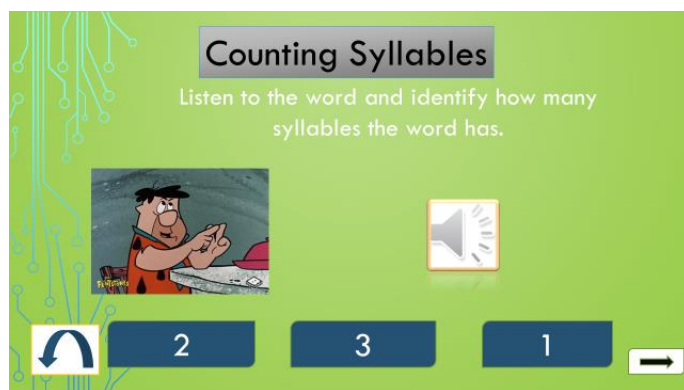


Figure 2.4. Counting Syllables

The following section is Vocabulary, in this section ESL learners are able to listen to the word and choose the picture that represents the word. This section has the purpose to encourage the student to use their background knowledge in order to help their brain with the process to remember and connect the image with the word that is heard (Figure 3. See also Appendix C, Slides #1-10).



Figure 3. Vocabulary

The last two components focus on Fluency and Reading Comprehension. Both are connected. In these sections, learners are able to practice fluency by reading a text with a specific time. In addition, after the fluency exercise, the student has to use their brain to self-regulate their

knowledge and connect it to the new information received (Figure 4. See also Appendix D, Slides #1-14).

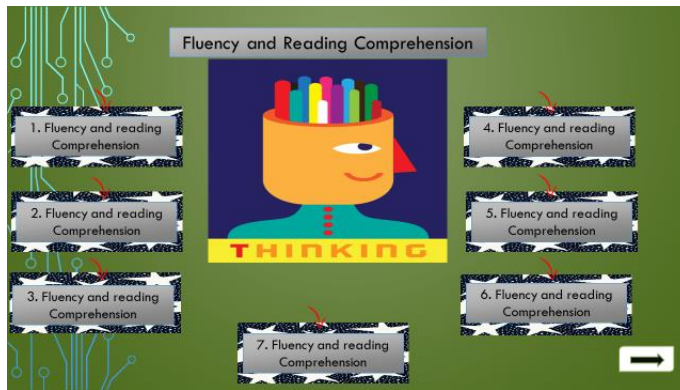


Figure 4. Fluency

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Learning a second language is a process that includes the use of different methods and strategies in order to achieve high academic performance. Reading skills have an important role in order to help students to acquire strong foundations to develop comprehension of written language. One strategy is to incorporate the use of metacognition because it allows readers to understand how to monitor their previous knowledge and develop critical thinking by having the possibility of self-assessing their language acquisition. Doing this project, I was able to analyze all my previous teaching experiences and compare them with all the new teaching strategies learned during the each semester. I feel more conscious about the reason why Colombia keeps continuing receiving low scores when assessing teaching English. In my perception, one of the biggest learning and teaching differences is the influence of incorporating reading strategies in the same way that we learned our native language. In my home country, most of the teachers teach language acquisition focused on vocabulary and grammar instructions rather than reading strategies. For this reason, readers are not able to analyze a text in the second language because they do not know how to self-correct themselves without the teacher's help.

Owing to this, the present project is supported for different research that focused on analyzing the influence of incorporating metacognition activities to strengthen reading abilities. After analyzing all the studies, the activities designed focused strictly on increasing the accuracy of reading and fluency. In each section, readers are able to progress through self-understanding and self-regulation learning. The design of the proposal focuses on the most important activities to strengthen reading comprehension, including the skills regarding fluency, phonological

awareness, and phonemic awareness, word meaning, and word reading fluency. Additionally, each series of activities will help readers to persevere in the process and continue learning even if they do not answer. Also, the activities encourage learners to be more self-reflective by listening carefully to the instructions and using reading comprehension to become fluent and successful readers in an L2 and also encourage critical thinking.

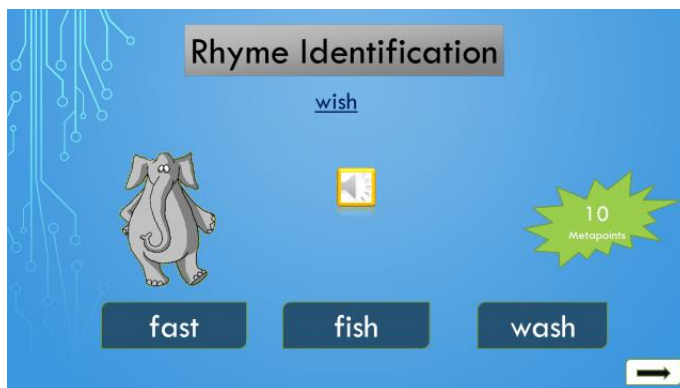
To conclude, it is important to highlight the importance of using the CBI method and also using metacognitive strategies to develop substantial L2 learning. I hope this resource can serve different ESL teachers as well as Colombian teachers to be able to use the product during their guided reading instruction or intervention time. Additionally, I hope to share these strategies with other teachers in order to explain to them how the acquisition of an L2 works and also, provide them with examples about how to address reading comprehension when they are teaching an L2 acquisition.

Appendices

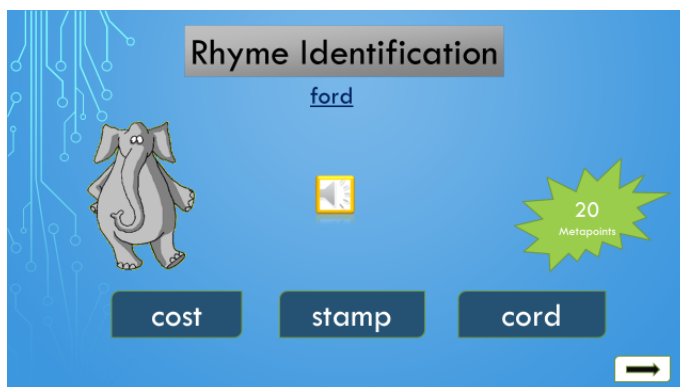
Appendix A: Phonemic Awareness



Slide 1 Rhyme Identification



Slide 2 Rhyme Identification



Slide 3 Rhyme Identification



Slide 4 Rhyme Identification



Slide 5 Rhyme Identification



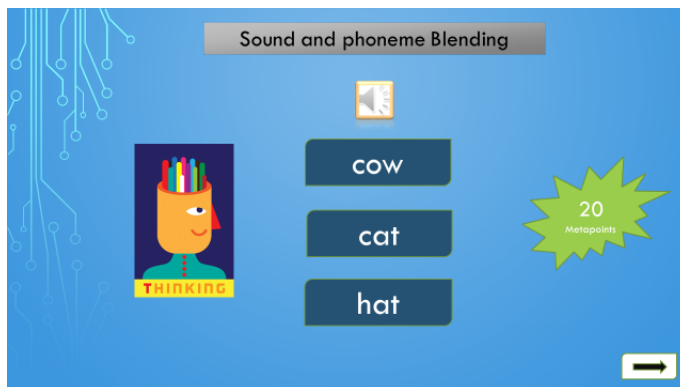
Slide 6 Rhyme Identification



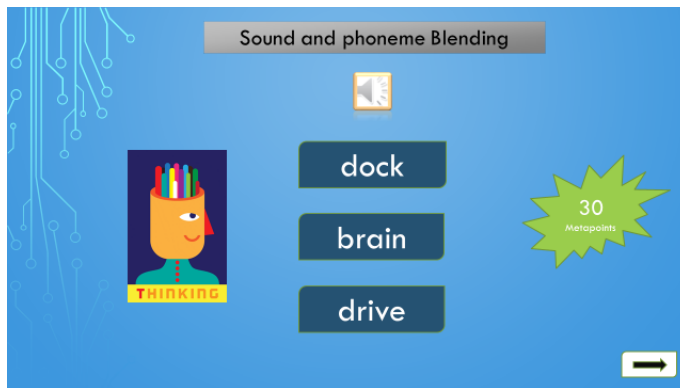
Slide 7 Sound and Phoneme Blending



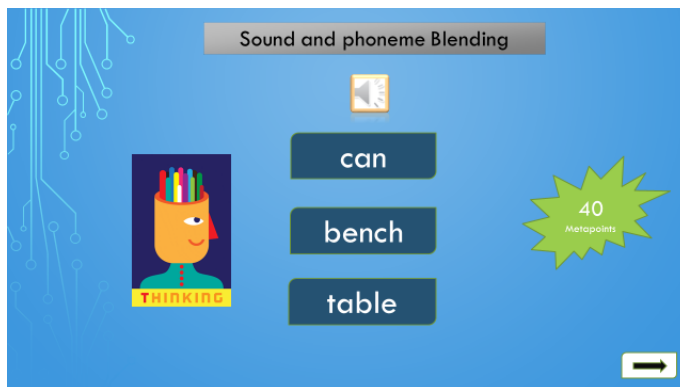
Slide 8 Sound and Phoneme Blending



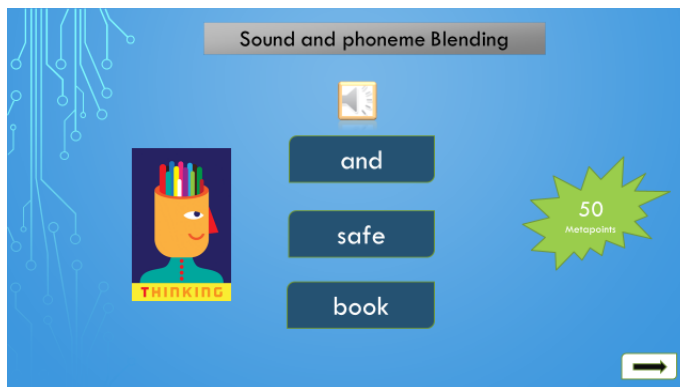
Slide 9 Sound and Phoneme Blending



Slide 10 Sound and Phoneme Blending



Slide 11 Sound and Phoneme Blending



Slide 12 Sound and Phoneme Blending

Sound Segmentation




Listen to each word and separate the sounds

10 Metapoints

b-u-s

b-o-a-t

b-o-ss

Slide 13 Sound and Phoneme Blending



Sound Segmentation

20 Metapoints

p-e-n

c-o-s-t

b-e-d

Slide 14 Sound Segmentation



Sound Segmentation

30 Metapoints

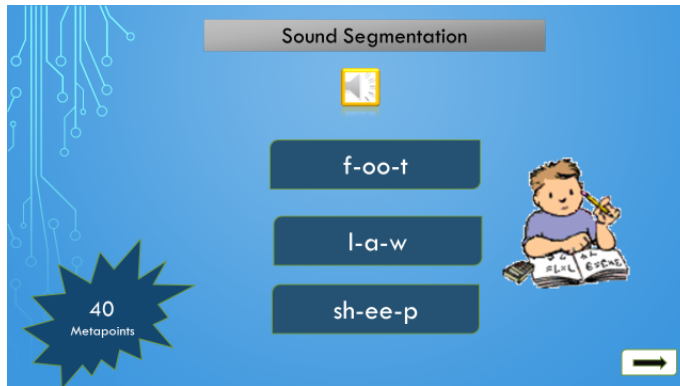
s-a-t

b-a-t

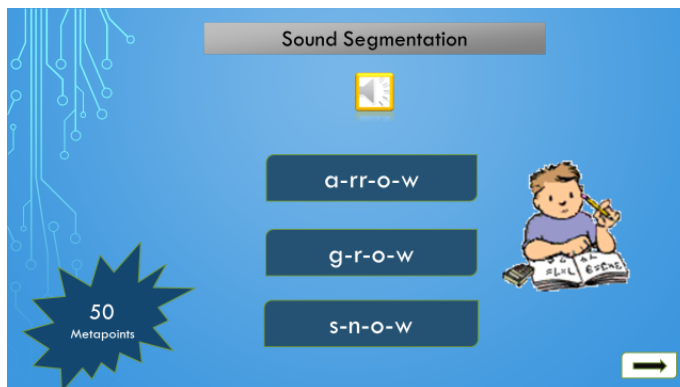
j-e-t

Slide 15 Sound Segmentation

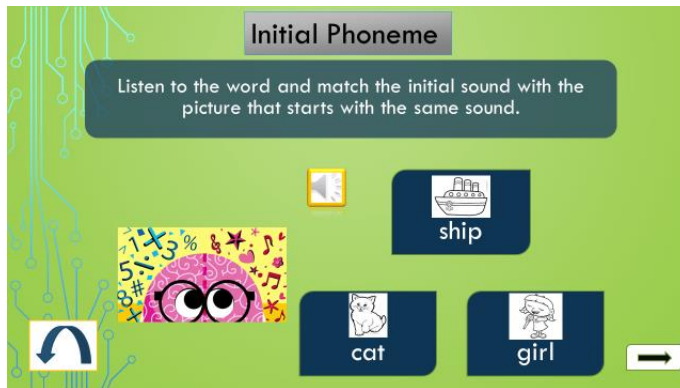


Slide 16 Sound Segmentation

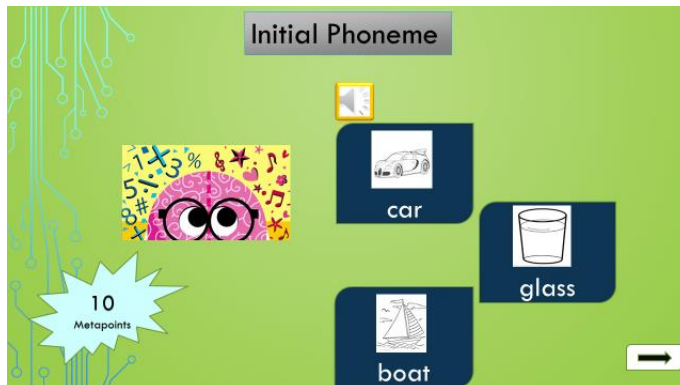


Slide 17 Sound Segmentation

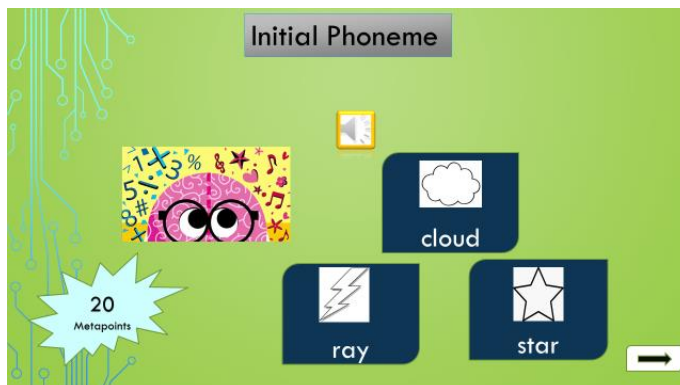
Appendix B: Phonological Awareness



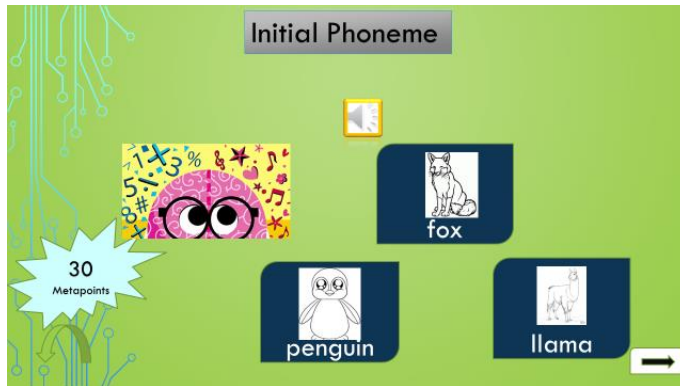
Slide 1 Initial Phoneme



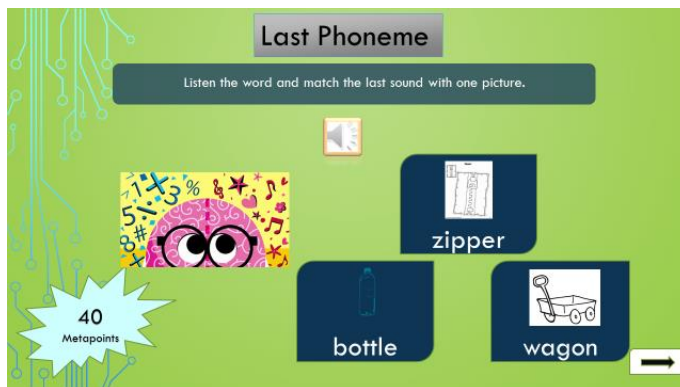
Slide 2 Initial Phoneme



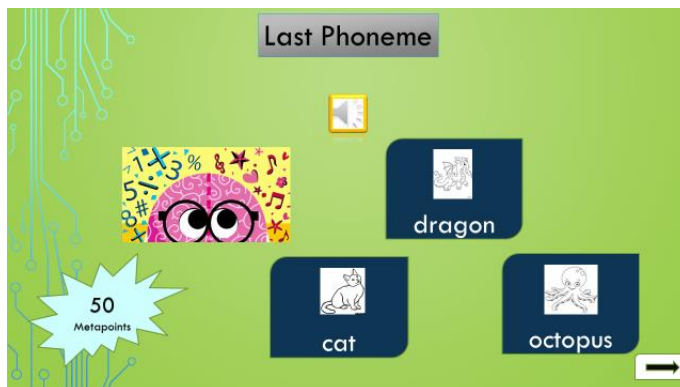
Slide 3 .Initial Phoneme



Slide 4 Initial Phoneme






Slide 5 Last Phoneme




Slide 6 Last Phoneme

Syllable Blending

Listen to the syllables and put the parts together to identify the whole word


pencil pen sing



Slide 7 Syllable Blending


Syllable Blending

Listen to the syllables and put the parts together to identify the whole word




10
Metapoints

puppy popcorn spot



Slide 8 Syllable Blending

Syllable Blending

Listen to the syllables and put the parts together to identify the whole word




20
Metapoints

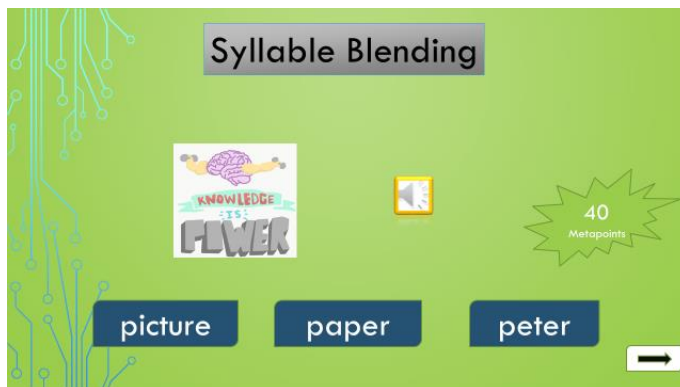
boat bad basket



Slide 9 Syllable Blending



Slide 10 Syllable Blending



Slide 11 Syllable Blending



Slide 12 Syllable Blending



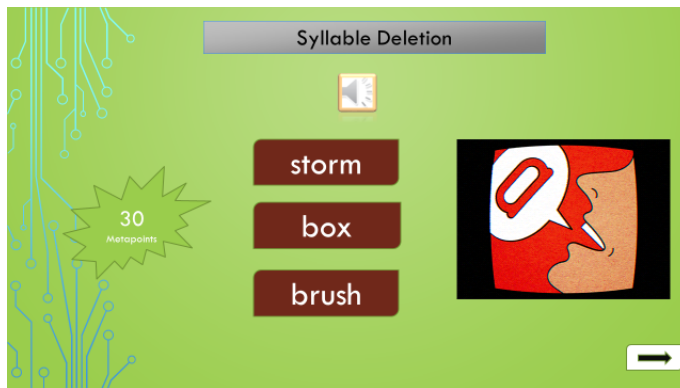
Slide 13 Syllable Deletion



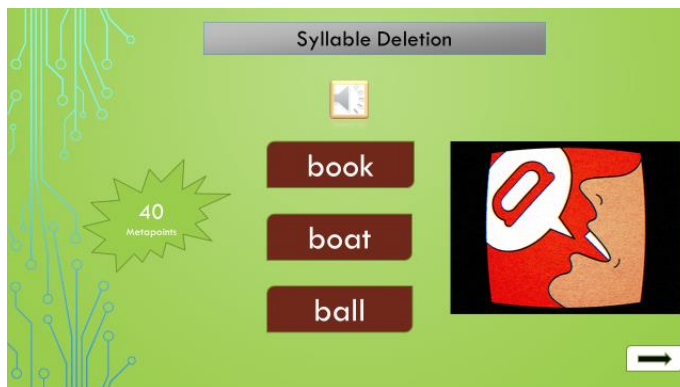
Slide 14 Syllable Deletion



Slide 15 Syllable Deletion



Slide 16 Syllable Deletion



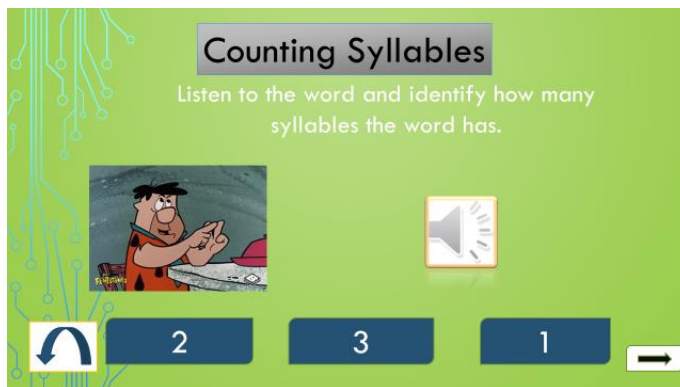
Slide 17 Syllable Deletion



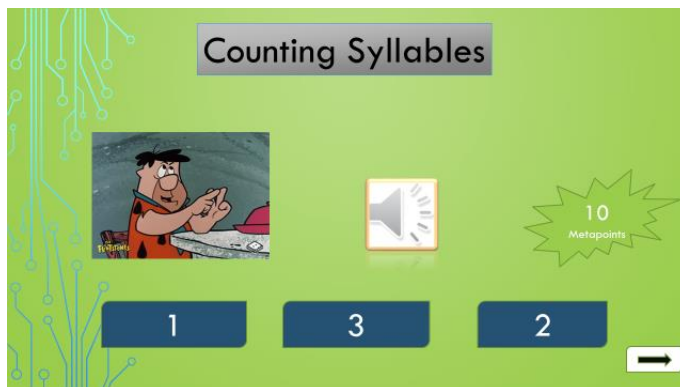
Slide 18 Slide 15 Syllable Deletion



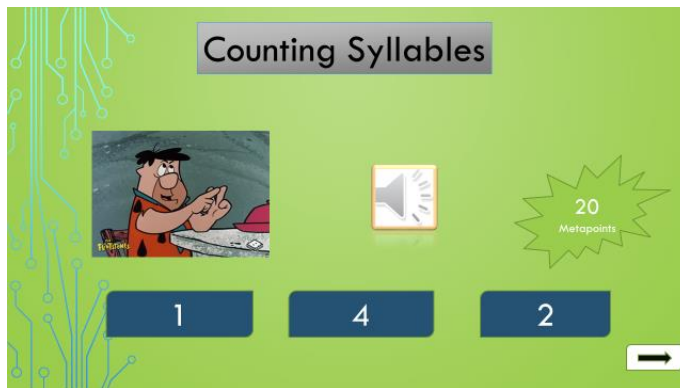
Slide 19 Syllable Deletion



Slide 20 Counting Syllables



Slide 21 Counting Syllables



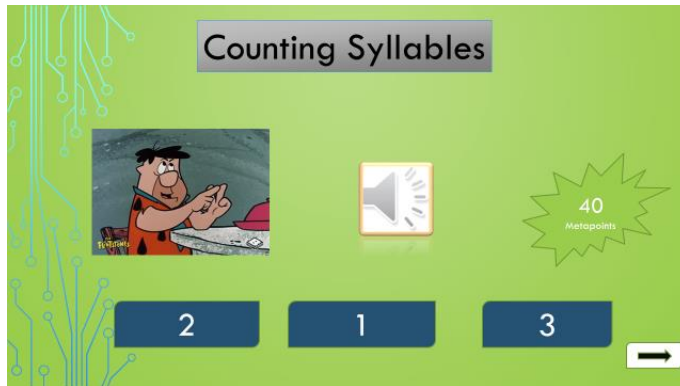
Slide 22 Counting Syllables



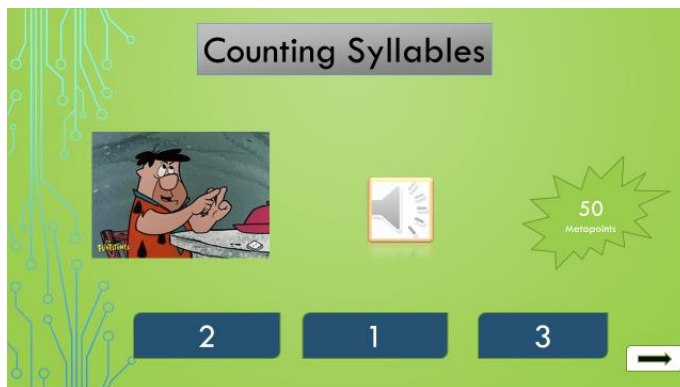
Slide 23 Counting Syllables



Slide 24 Counting Syllables

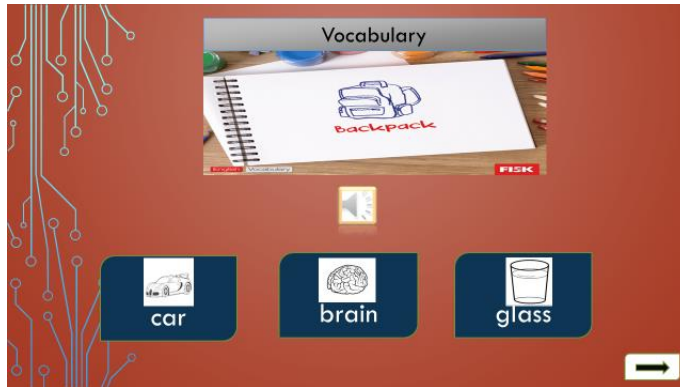


Slide 25 Counting Syllables



Slide 26 Counting Syllables

Appendix C: Vocabulary



Slide 1 Vocabulary



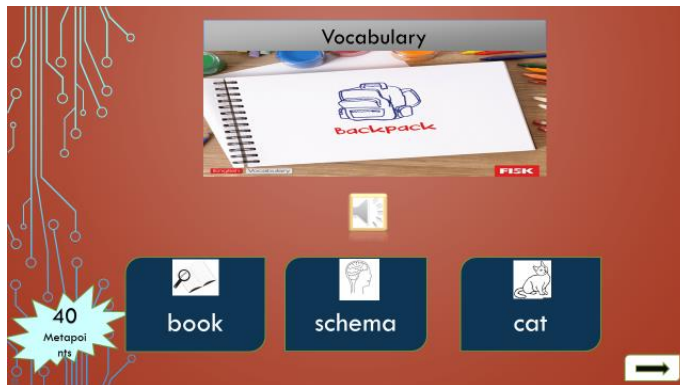
Slide 2 Vocabulary



Slide 3 Vocabulary



Slide 4 Vocabulary



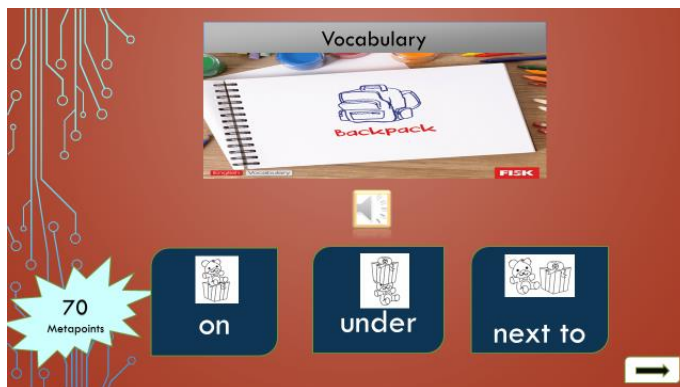
Slide 5 Vocabulary



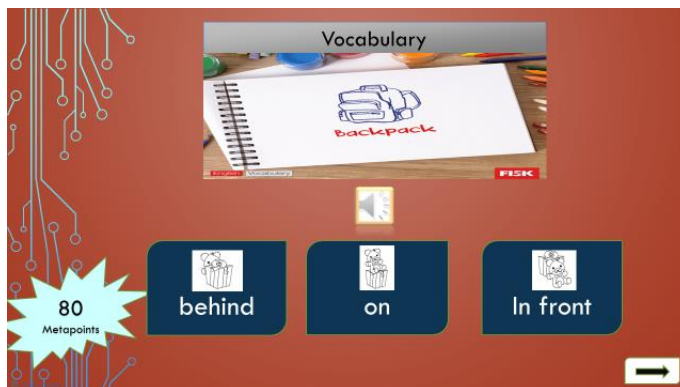
Slide 6 Vocabulary



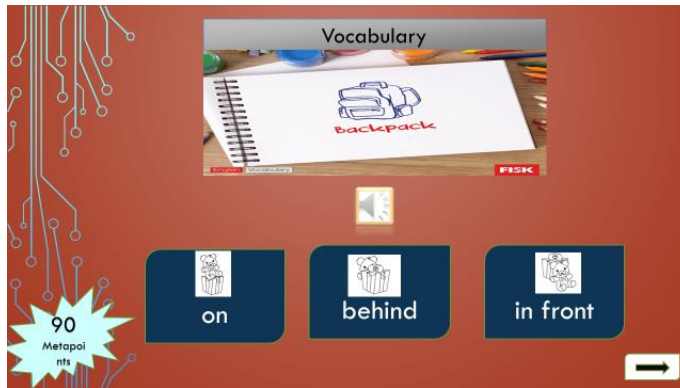
Slide 7 Vocabulary



Slide 8 Vocabulary

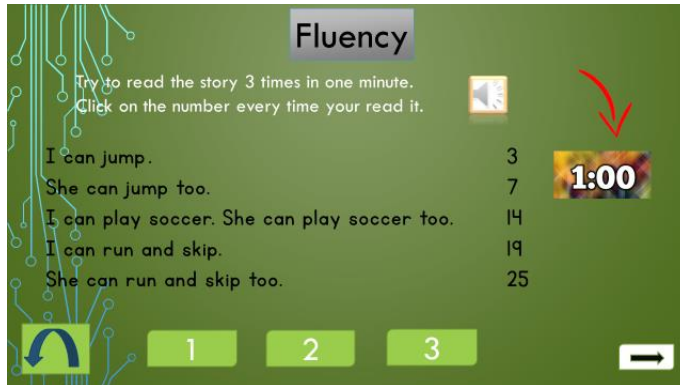


Slide 9 Vocabulary



Slide 10 Vocabulary

Appendix D: Fluency and Reading Comprehension



Fluency

Try to read the story 3 times in one minute.
Click on the number every time your read it.

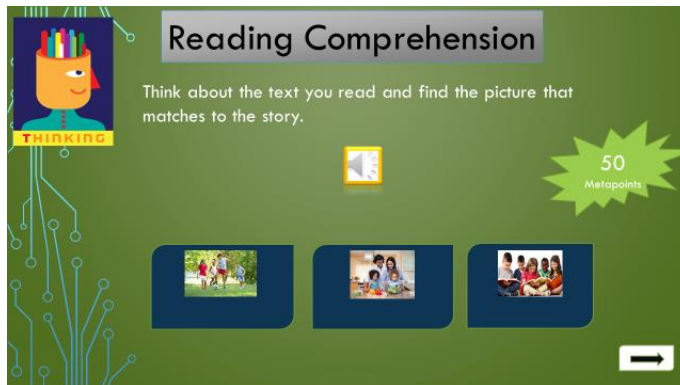
I can jump. 3
She can jump too. 7
I can play soccer. She can play soccer too. 14
I can run and skip. 19
She can run and skip too. 25

1:00

1 2 3

→

Slide 1 Fluency



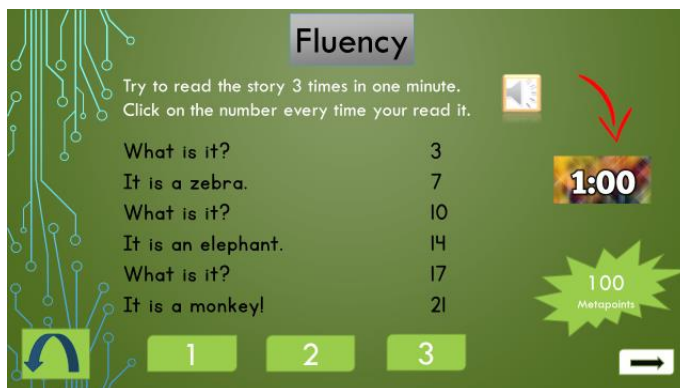
Reading Comprehension

Think about the text you read and find the picture that matches to the story.

50 Metapoints

→

Slide 2 Reading Comprehension



Fluency

Try to read the story 3 times in one minute.
Click on the number every time your read it.

What is it? 3
It is a zebra. 7
What is it? 10
It is an elephant. 14
What is it? 17
It is a monkey! 21

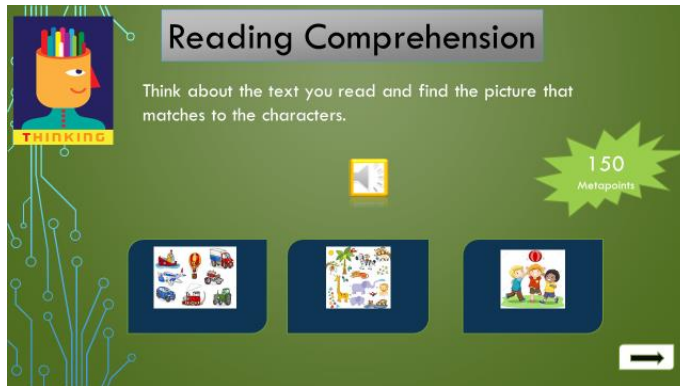
1:00

100 Metapoints

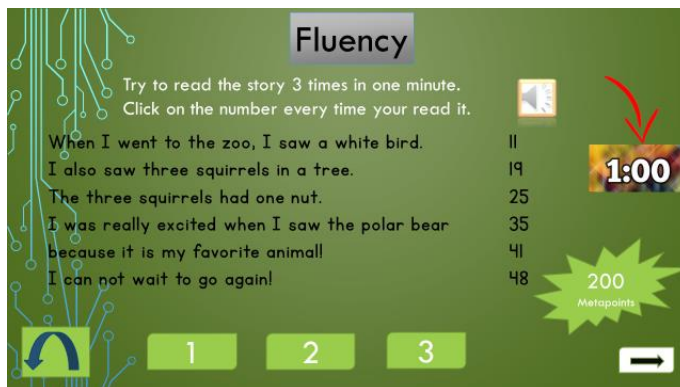
1 2 3

→

Slide 3 Fluency



Slide 4 Reading Comprehension



Slide 5 Fluency



Slide 6 Reading Comprehension

Fluency

Try to read the story 3 times in one minute.
Click on the number every time you read it.

This is my toy.
This toy is big.
This toy is big and red.
The toy has four wheels.
The toy moves fast.
My brother wants to play with my toy.
My sister wants to play with my toy.

4
8
14
19
23
31
39

1:00

300 Metapoints

1 2 3

Slide 7 Fluency

Reading Comprehension

According to the previous text, which toy do you think the boy is describing?

350 Metapoints

Slide 8 Reading Comprehension

Fluency

Try to read the story 3 times in one minute.
Click on the number every time you read it.

Roberto has a dream. He wants to eat an ice cream
"Let's go" says his Dad. He drives to the shop.
Roberto and his Dad ate a big ice cream.
The ice cream was good.
His Dad is tired now. He wants to sleep.
"Let's go" says Roberto.

11
21
30
35
44
48

1:00

400 Metapoints

1 2 3

Slide 9 Fluency



Reading Comprehension

According to the previous text, Roberto's wish is to _____.

450 Metapoints

THINKING

1 2 3

→

Slide 10 Reading Comprehension



Fluency

Try to read the story 3 times in one minute.
Click on the number every time your read it.

I want to go to the beach. My mom says 10
We can go next weekend. I am so excited to see 21
the ocean. My mom says we can go to a place where 33
we can see sea turtles and jellyfish. We have to leave early 45
in the morning because it takes three hours to go. 55
This is going to be the best weekend ever!! 64

1:00

500 Metapoints

1 2 3

→

Slide 11 Fluency



Reading Comprehension

According to the previous text, where can they see different ocean animals?

550 Metapoints

THINKING

1 2 3

→

Slide 12 Reading Comprehension

Fluency

Try to read the story 3 times in one minute.
Click on the number every time you read it.

Today we learned about George Washington.
The teacher taught us that he was the 1st president
of the United States of America.
George Washington was born in Virginia. His picture
is on the quarter coin. He helped our country to be free.
George Washington died on December 14th, 1799.

6
16
22
30
42
49

1:00

600
Metapoints

1 2 3

→

Slide 13 Fluency

Reading Comprehension

This is a self-regulated activity. After reading the previous
text answer the following questions.

What did you learn?

How did you learn about George
Washington?

What did you understand?

What did not you know about George
Washington before reading?

650
Metapoints

→

Slide 14 Reading Comprehension

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